Claims

1. A method of verifying the authenticity of goods wherein a set of public data is applied to the goods and, upon receiving a request for verification, the public data applied to the goods is entered into a predetermined encryption algorithm to generate a verification code; characterised in that:

- a security code (10) is applied to the goods, said security code (10) having been derived by means of a predetermined encryption algorithm (14) from said public data (8) applied to the goods and a plurality of private data sets (12) held by a verifier;

- and, upon receiving a request for verification, each private data set (12) is entered into said predetermined encryption algorithm (14) together with the public data (8) applied to the goods to generate a list of verification codes (24), and said list of verification codes (24) is compared with the security code (10) applied to the goods to assess the authenticity of goods.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the verifier maintains a log (30) of requests for verification and, upon receiving a request for verification, compares the public data (8) applied to the goods with the data held in the log (30) to assess the authenticity of goods.

3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the public data (8) includes a batch number.

4. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the public data (8) includes date information.

5. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the private data (12) includes an item number.

6. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said public data (8) and said security code (10) is incorporated into the design printed onto the goods as reversed out characters, blends or tints.

7. A method of marking goods to enable the authenticity of those goods to be verified, wherein a set of public data is applied to the goods for use in a subsequent verification process; characterised in that a security code (10) is applied to the goods, said security code (10) having been derived by means of a predetermined encryption algorithm (14) from said public data (8) applied to the goods and a plurality of private data sets (12) held by a verifier.

8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the public data (8) includes a batch number.

9. A method according to claim 7 or claim 8, wherein the public data (8) includes date information.

10. A method according to any one of claims 7 to 9, wherein said public data (8) and said security code (10) is incorporated into the design printed onto the goods as reversed out characters, blends or tints.

11. Goods marked for verification purposes, each of said goods including a set of public data applied to the goods for use in a subsequent verification process; characterised in that each of said goods includes a security code (10) applied to the goods, said security code (10) having been derived by means of a predetermined encryption algorithm from said public data (8) applied to the goods and a plurality of private data (12) sets held by a verifier.

12. Goods according to claim 11, wherein the public data (8) includes a batch number.

13. Goods according to claim 11 or claim 12, wherein the public data (8) includes date information.

14. Goods according to any one of claims 11 to 13, wherein said public data (8) and said security code (10) is incorporated into the design printed onto the goods as reversed out characters, blends or tints.